

Draft
Virginia SOL Technical Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Created October 30, 2003

Date: October 16-17, 2003

Location: Richmond, VA

Attendees

Dr. Ron Hambleton, Chairperson
Dr. Linda Crocker, Member
Dr. Barbara Dodd, Member
Dr. Barbara Plake, Member
Dr. John Poggio, Member
Ms Shelley Loving-Ryder, Virginia Department of Education
Dr. Robert Triscari, Virginia Department of Education
Dr. Allen Lau, Harcourt Assessment
Ms. Cheryl Schiano, Harcourt Assessment

Observers

Jason Wermers, Richmond-Times Dispatch
Roxanne Grossman, citizen
Betty Lambdon, citizen
Tamara Sober Giecek, citizen

Day 1 Morning

Introductions – review of current agenda

Chair Ron Hambleton called the meeting to order at 9:15am. Robert Triscari asked that the agenda be amended to include a discussion of linking item strategy rather than the English Language Development Assessment (ELDA) on the afternoon of the first day.

Program updates and overview

Robert Triscari offered an overview of the Standards of Learning Testing (SOL) program and upcoming changes to it.

Following last spring's stand-alone field test, this year the SOL test will be expanded with three new history tests: U.S. History to 1877; U.S. History from 1877; and Civics and Economics. Students between the grades of 4 through 7 will have the opportunity to take these three tests in place of the cumulative 8th grade History and Social Science test.

Reading and Math tests at grades 4, 6, and 7 will be field tested during the spring of both 2004 and 2005. As these tests become operational (2006), the blueprints of existing SOL tests in Reading and Math will change so only the current year's standards are being tested, except for grade 3 which will continue to be cumulative. John Poggio asked that

the technical manual include information that describes the structural shifts as they occur, citing the importance of formally documenting changes.

Robert Triscari further described the growth of the VASOL into a year-round testing program with the advent of Term Graduates and Expedited Retakes, resulting in students being given the opportunity to test up to six times in a single year.

Review of online comparability study results

Statistical tables relating to the comparability of online testing were shared with the committee. Robert Triscari provided a verbal overview of the study's design, along with his plans to present a complete study at AERA, and possibly CCSSO, next spring. At this time, comparability studies have been completed for all EOC subjects except Geometry. All comparability studies should be complete by the end of the year.

Committee future

Shelley Loving- Ryder was asked to speak to the future of the committee. She provided a brief history of the formation of the committee, whose five-year term of appointment is set to expire in April 2004. The future of the committee is up to the Board of Education to a large degree, but indications are that it will continue. It is likely that a technical advisory committee will be added for day-to-day technical questions.

Chair Hambleton remarked that on Friday, the committee would set a date for their next meeting and asked that the department inform committee members of any changes to its membership as soon as possible out of consideration for their schedules.

Vertical equating

Standard setting and the introduction of a vertical scale into the VASOL program was discussed for some time, suggesting that there are many different options to consider. In the end, the chair requested that Harcourt bring back a plan for the establishment of a vertical scale to the next TAC meeting so they can review something concrete rather than trying to discuss the matter in the abstract.

Linking strategies

The remainder of the afternoon was dedicated to a discussion of linking strategies. Members were asked to share their experiences with linking strategies used in other states, particularly those who release entire test forms each year.

The chair spoke extensively of the Massachusetts design that consists of common items (equivalent to VA's "core") and 1 of 12 "matrix blocks" that are scattered through on a random basis. Matrix blocks include both Linking and Field Test items. Students are scored only on the common (core) items, but reports to schools indicate performance across all items, providing schools with more information for instructional purposes. The entire core (common items) serve as links in Massachusetts. The matrix represents about 1/5 of the tests.

The meeting was recessed until Friday morning.

Day 2

A review of the day's agenda reflected three goals: (1) review of technical manual; (2) review of Standards Work Document; and (3) establish the TAC meeting date for 2004.

Review of Technical Manual

The technical manual was reviewed by the committee and was very well received. The committee was particularly impressed that their comments from the previous year appeared to be addressed in this year's manual. There remains some concern that the document still appears to be the work of committee rather than a single person. The IRT modeling information is not well written and needs further work. Requests were made for more information about composition of the content review committees and how they are conducted.

In conclusion, the committee was impressed by the degree of improvements made to the manual; however, there are still improvements to be made. The committee recommended that the Harcourt staff should undertake a thorough review of the document from both an editorial and content viewpoint. Specific questions should be emailed to committee members who will be happy to provide feedback.

The committee tentatively set the dates of October 28-29, 2004, for the next TAC meeting.

Update - validity studies - Standards Work Document

Shelley Loving- Ryder introduced the Standards Work Document to the committee as a follow-up to their earlier requests for validity studies to be undertaken by the department. The department recognizes it as a first step and acknowledged that a timeline had not been set for the remainder of the study at this time.

The committee reviewed and discussed the document. The committee wished to communicate their wishes directly to the members of the Board of Education and unanimously passed the following motion:

The VASOL Technical Advisory Committee wishes to communicate to the Virginia Department of Education and state Board of Education that it is very pleased that DOE and the Board has taken a first step in assessing the effectiveness of the VASOL program, as recommended in our earlier report. It is strongly recommend that the DOE, to the extent possible, undertake additional validity studies prior to the next TAC meeting in October 2004. In addition, by October 2004, the TAC recommends that a comprehensive plan and timeline be established for additional validity studies.

There was some discussion about how best to communicate this motion to the Board. Shelley Loving-Ryder will look into the question and notify Ron Hambleton if a letter from him is the needed.

Committee members were thanked and the meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.